

Message Text

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ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01

INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01 AID-05 IO-10 OPR-01 NEA-09 /093 W

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R 220625Z JAN 75

FM AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9018

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L PHNOM PENH 1297

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, PFOR, FR, TH, CB

SUBJ: LOCAL THAI, FRENCH AND ISRAELI EMBASSY REACTIONS TO
PHNOM PENH SECURITY SITUATION

REF: PHNOM PENH 1258 (KHMER REPORT, JANUARY 21, 1975)

1. SUMMARY: THE THAI EMBASSY HERE, WITH A NEW AMBASSADOR, IS NERVOUS ABOUT THE KC THREAT TO PHNOM PENH AND IS CONSIDERING EVACUATION. WE ARE ENDEAVORING TO REASSURE THEM. THE FRENCH HAVE ALSO BEEN WEIGHING POSSIBLE EVACUATION, BUT HAVE REACTED CALMLY THUS FAR TO A ROCKET LANDING IN THE GROUNDS OF THEIR PRINCIPAL LYCEE. END SUMMARY.

2. ON JANUARY 21, THE THAI COUNSELLOR EXPRESSED TO EMBOFFS HIS EMBASSY'S CONCERN OVER THE KC THREAT TO THE MEKONG AND POCHENTONG AIRPORT. HE SAID THAT HIS AMBASSADOR AND THE MILITARY ATTACHE ARE BOTH NEW TO CAMBODIA, NERVOUS ABOUT THE CURRENT SECURITY SITUATION IN PHNOM PENH, AND ARE CONSIDERING EVACUATION.

3. EMBOFFS STRESSED TO COUNSELLOR THAT, FOR ITS PART, THE AMERICAN EMBASSY HAS NOT VIEWED THE SITUATION IN ANY WAY CRITICAL ENOUGH TO WARRANT SERIOUS CONSIDERATION

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OF EVACUATION. THEY DESCRIBED THE GENERALLY COMPETENT

FANK PERFORMANCE AROUND PHNOM PENH AND EXPRESSED CONFIDENCE THAT POCHENTONG WOULD REMAIN OPEN AND MEKONG CONVOYS WOULD RESUME SHORTLY. COUNSELLOR SEEMED REASSURED. WE INTEND TO FOLLOW-UP THIS DISCUSSION WITH OTHER EFFORTS TO STIFFEN THE RESOLVE OF THE CONGENITALLY NERVOUS THAI EMBASSY.

4. COUNSELLOR ALSO TOLD EMBOFFS THAT HE HAD BEEN APPROACHED BY FRENCH EMBASSY TO DISCUSS POSSIBLE EVACUATION OF LARGE PORTION OF FRENCH COMMUNITY HERE TO BANGKOK. FRENCH HAVE MADE THE ROUNDS IN THE RESPECT, DISCUSSING EVACUATION PROCEDURES WITH US, BRITISH, ISRAELIS, AND POSSIBLY OTHERS, AS WELL. THIS APPEARS TO BE A CONTINGENCY EFFORT BY THE FRENCH, HOWEVER, WHO THUS FAR ARE NOT REPEATING THEIR PANICKY PERFORMANCE DURING LAST YEAR'S DRY SEASON. ALTHOUGH THE WELL-KNOWN FRENCH LYCEE DESCARTES TOOK A ROCKET ROUND RECENTLY AND CLASSES WERE SUSPENDED (NO STUDENTS WERE IN ATTENDANCE AT THE TIME), THE FRENCH MILITARY ATTACHE TOLD A MEDTC OFFICER YESTERDAY THAT THE SCHOOL WILL BE REOPENED SHORTLY. THIS CONTRASTS STRIKINGLY WITH THE FRENCH REACTION TO A SIMILAR ATTACK LAST YEAR WHICH CAUSED THE CLOSURE OF THE SCHOOL FOR MONTHS AND A HURRIED EXODUS BY MUCH OF THE FRENCH COMMUNITY (REFTEL).

5. BETRAYING PERHAPS SOME NERVOUSNESS ABOUT THE SECURITY SITUATION, AN ISRAELI EMBASSY OFFICIAL YESTERDAY SOUGHT OUT EMBOFF TO REVIEW BRIEFLY HIS EMBASSY'S PARTICIPATION IN OUR E&E PLAN. IN COURSE OF DISCUSSION, EMBOFF STRESSED THAT WE DO NOT IN ANY WAY CONSIDER THE SITUATION HAZARDOUS ENOUGH TO SERIOUSLY CONTEMPLATE EVACUATION.

6. TO THE BEST OF OUR KNOWLEDGE, OTHER DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS ARE REACTING CALMLY. THROUGH BRIEFINGS AND CONVERSATIONS, WE ARE DOING WHAT WE CAN TO ENCOURAGE THIS RESPONSE TO THE SITUATION.

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